

IN THE CLAIMS

Please substitute claims 1-19 with the following:

1. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus for replying to an inquiry from customers comprising:

means for storing a customer priority for each customer in a customer priority information table;

means for assigning a reply priority to said inquiry according to said customer priority information table;

means for determining whether a solution to said inquiry is stored; and

means for replying to said inquiry based on said reply priority;

means coupled to said replying means for storing past and new inquiries together with their solutions to respective inquiry; and

means for notifying an other reply means, wherein

when said inquiry is already stored but the solution for said inquiry is not stored in said past and new inquiry storing means, the reply priority for the inquiry is revised to be higher value and thus revised reply priority is transferred to said other reply means together with said inquiry.

2. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising:

means coupled to said assigning means for setting said reply priority to said inquiry upon reception.

3-4. (Cancelled).

5. (Currently Amended) An information processing system, comprising:

an electronic device for transmitting/receiving information;

a communication network to be coupled to said electronic device for communicating said information to one of a plurality of customers requesting said information;

means for storing a customer priority for each of the plurality of customers in a customer priority information table;

means for assigning a reply priority to the request for said information according to said customer priority information table;

means for determining whether a result of processing relating to said information is stored; and

reply means coupled to said communication network for executing said processing relating to said information based on said reply priority if said determining means determines that the result is not stored and for transmitting the result of said processing to said electronic device by way of said communicating network;

wherein when the solution for said information is not stored in said solution storing means, the reply priority for the information is revised and thus revised reply priority is supplied to said reply means.

6. (Original) An information processing system as claimed in Claim 5, further comprising:

means coupled to said reply means for setting priority upon replying to a received information.

7. (Original) An information processing system as claimed in Claim 5, further comprising:

means coupled to said reply means for storing solutions for the received information.

8. (Cancelled).

9. (Currently Amended) An information processing system, comprising:

an electronic device for transmitting/receiving information;

a communication network to be coupled to said electronic device for communicating said information from said electronic device to one of a plurality of customers requesting said information;

means for storing a customer priority for each of the plurality of customers in a customer priority information table;

means for assigning a reply priority to the request for said information according to said customer priority information table;

means for determining whether a result of processing relating to said information is stored;

a first reply means coupled to said network for executing said processing relating to said information based on said reply priority if said determining means determines that the result is not stored and for transmitting the result of said processing to said electronic device by way of said communicating network; and

a second reply means coupled to said first reply means for processing related to said information transferred from said first reply means and for transferring thus processed result to said first reply means;

wherein when said information is already received but is remained unsolved, the reply priority for the information is revised to be higher value at said first reply means.

10. (Original) An information processing system as claimed in Claim 9, wherein said electronic device is a computer device.

11. (Original) An information processing system as claimed in Claim 9, wherein said electronic device is a telephone device.

12. (Cancelled).

13. (Currently Amended) Method for processing information having priority concept comprising the steps of:

storing a customer priority for a plurality of customers in a customer priority information table;

receiving an inquiry from one of said plurality of customers;

assigning a reply priority to said inquiry according to said customer priority information table;

determining whether a solution to the inquiry is stored; and

replying to said inquiry based on said reply priority;

revising the reply priority for the information when the solution for the information is not stored in said solution storing means; and

supplying said revised reply priority to said replying means.

14. (Previously Presented) Method for processing information as claimed in Claim 13, further comprising the step of:

setting said reply priority upon replying to an inquiry by priority setting means.

15. (Cancelled).

16. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium containing instructions to perform a method comprising the steps of:

storing a customer priority for a plurality of customers in a customer priority information table;

receiving an inquiry from one of said plurality of customers;

assigning a reply priority to said inquiry according to said customer priority information table;

determining whether a solution to the inquiry is stored; ~~and~~

replying to said inquiry based on said reply priority;

revising the reply priority for the information when the solution for the information is not stored in said solution storing means; and

supplying said revised reply priority to said replying means.

17. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium as claimed in Claim 16, said method further comprising the step of:

setting said reply priority upon replying to an inquiry by priority setting means.

18-19. (Cancelled).